

REMARKS

In the specification, paragraph numbers 0057, 0058 and 0059 have been amended to correct their references to the figures. Support for the amendments appears in the figures themselves and in the descriptions of the figures in the original paragraphs.

Claim 1 has been amended and claim 5 has been canceled. Claim 12 has been added. Support for the amendment to claim 1 and for the addition of claim 12 appears in the specification in paragraphs 0040-0042 and in Figure 2. Applicants reserve the opportunity to pursue the subject matter of original claims 1 and 5 in the future without prejudice or disclaimer.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 1 110 605 to Carmello in view of Groppi et al., *Catalyst Today*, vol. 69, pp. 63-73 (2001). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

In the sole interest of expediting prosecution, claim 1 has been amended to recite that at least one monolithic catalyst or catalyst support comprises axially oriented variations about its circumference within the multitubular reactor of claim 1. By amending claim 1 in this manner, applicants do not acquiesce in the rejection and do not express agreement with the merits of the rejection. To the contrary, applicants reserve the opportunity to pursue the subject matter of all the original claims without prejudice in the future.

Carmello and Groppi, either individually or combined, do not suggest the subject matter of the amended claims. In the discussion of the rejection of original claims 4 and 5 on page 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner mentioned that Carmello is silent as to the operating gap distance between the reactor tube and monolith catalyst support being varied along the circumference of the reactor tube. The Examiner suggested that there would exist at least some slight variation in operating gap distance along the circumference of the tube, since manufacturing tolerances often dictate that the shape of the monolith catalyst supports will not exactly conform to the shape of the reactor tube in which the support structures are to be inserted.

Carmello and Groppi do not suggest, however, a controlled variation in the size of the operating gap by way of axially oriented variations, such as grooves, about the circumference of the catalyst or catalyst support. Also, nothing in the Examiner's remarks regarding gaps due to manufacturing tolerances would suggest the subject matter of the claims. For at least these reason, the present claims would not have been obvious in view of the cited references.

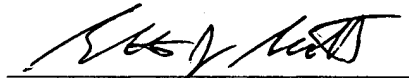
In view of the above, applicant believes the pending claims of the above-captioned application are in allowable form. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Application No.: 10/750472
Response dated: 5/29/2008
Office Action dated: 12/3/2007

Applicant believes that no extension of time is necessary to make this Reply timely. Should applicant be in error, applicant respectfully requests that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Reply timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 03-3325.

Please direct any questions or comments to Steven J. Scott at 607-974-3322.

Respectfully submitted,



DATE: May 29 2008

Steven J. Scott
Attorney for Assignee
Registration Number: 43,911
Corning Incorporated
SP-TI-03-1
Corning, NY 14831
Phone: 607-974-3322